REPORT OF BUSINESS & PERFORMANCE MANAGER

SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013/14 Part 2

Under both Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and Wales Programme for Improvement, the Authority is required to publish an Improvement Plan Part 2 by October 31st. This reports on the progress against the work programme proposed in the Improvement Plan Part 1 for the year 2013/14.

Recommendation:

Members are requested to approve the Improvement Plan Part 2 for 2013/14

(For further information, please contact Alan Hare, Business & Performance Manager on extension 4810)

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Improvement Plan Part 2 2013/14



<u>Introduction</u>

The National Park Authority delivers a wide variety of work that contributes to the vitality of the local area from conservation management and public access to local employment and affordable housing. The National Park Authority will continue to endeavour to meet the expectations of our customers, both residents and visitors, during a time of economic constraint. This document sets out our corporate priorities in the years ahead and sets specific targets for the National Park Authority to deliver in 2013-14.

Under Welsh Government legislation the Authority is required to publish an Annual Improvement Plan in two parts. Part 1 sets out what improvements to its services, in terms of quality, effectiveness, access, sustainability and cost, it proposes to make in the current year. This is finalised during May and makes use of the most up to date information available. The Improvement Plan Part 2 looks back at the previous year ending 31st March and must be published by the end of October.

The National Parks face growing and sometimes conflicting demands to deliver conservation, public access, local employment and affordable housing, at a time when resources are being constrained. The Authority is fully committed to continuously improving its services.

How did we develop the improvement outcomes and objectives?

Although the NPA is a relatively small organisation there are many factors influencing its work. These include

- The statutory purposes as defined in the Environment Act 1995;
- The National Park Management Plan which sets out the long term vision for the National Park;
- The policy context provided by the National Park Policy Statement produced by the Welsh Government;
- The Welsh Government's Programme for Government;
- The statutory role as the planning authority for the national park area and the policies set out in the Local Development Plan;
- Welsh Government's sustainable development scheme One Wales: One Planet
- The Single Integrated Plan for Pembrokeshire (The NPA helps deliver many of the priority actions in the environment section of this plan)
- Other Welsh Government legislation, policies and strategies such as the Environment Bill, draft Planning Bill and Future Generations consultation
- The resources available to fund activities
- Past performance
- Reports by Wales Audit Office on the National Park Authority
- Responses to surveys from residents, visitors and service users.

A number of workshops were held, involving staff and Members of the Authority, to identify the priority outcomes for the National Park Authority and how these will be measured.

Who did we consult?

We consulted on a draft of this Improvement Plan with staff, and key stakeholders including Welsh Government, Countryside Council for Wales (now National Resources Wales) and Pembrokeshire County Council. Information was also gained from the Pembrokeshire Citizens Panel, customer and staff surveys, and feedback from the biannual staff workshops which include group discussions on service topics. The Improvement Plan Part 1 was posted on the web site for comments.

Comments on this or for future versions of the Improvement Plan may be emailed to info@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk with a subject of 'Improvement Plan' or in writing to PCNPA, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock, SA72 6DY



Background

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was designated in 1952 under the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

The National Park covers an area of 612,km², with approximately 23,000 people living in some 50 community council areas. At its widest, the National Park is about 16km wide and at its narrowest only 200m. Most of the National Park is in private ownership.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority was created as a free standing special purpose local authority under the 1995 Environment Act. The Authority consists of 18 Members, 12 nominated by Pembrokeshire County Council and six appointed by the Welsh Government.

Park Purposes

The Act specifies that the purposes of a National Park Authority are

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park area
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

The Act also states that in pursuing the above purposes the Authority has a duty to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities.

As part of local government, the Authority also contributes to many of the Welsh Government's wider goals for the economy, health, sustainability and social inclusion. In addition, the Authority meets the aspirations for better public services set out in policy publications including One Wales: One Planet and the emerging Living Wales Programme.

The Authority is the statutory planning authority for the National Park area and is responsible for the preparation of the Local Development Plan. Every five years the Authority is required to produce a National Park Management Plan which sets out how it would like to see the National Park managed not just by the Authority itself but by the other agencies and organisations whose activities might impact on the Park.

Funding

The Authority's net expenditure is determined by the Welsh Government, by allocating the annual National Park Grant and levy, remained unchanged for 2013/14 at £4,727,137 with an additional capital grant of £116,667.

When providing the funding, the Welsh Government also specifies a number of performance targets in its annual Strategic Grant Letter covering sustainability, social inclusion, corporate governance, access to the countryside and planning.

The Improvement Plan sets out our four improvement outcomes and is intended to:

- State our aspirations for the Park and how these may benefit people
- Guide our work and explain our priorities
- Inform our staff and key partner organisations
- Inspire and engage others to contribute to our desired outcomes
- Form the basis of our business planning



Our Vision

Enthuse for today, enlighten for tomorrow, cherish forever

Our Role

To conserve the landscape, environment and culture, support community well-being and promote appreciation and enjoyment of the National Park.

The Improvement Outcomes we would like to deliver as set out in Improvement Plan Part 1 2013/14

The successful delivery of this strategy will lead to an improvement in the delivery of the following outcomes:

- 1 The landscape, environment and culture of the National Park are conserved for current and future generations.
- 2 Residents and visitors from a wide range of backgrounds enjoy, appreciate and understand the National Park.
- 3 The work of the National Park Authority has a positive impact on the local economy and the well-being of residents and visitors to the National Park.
- 4 The National Park Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners.

Improvement Outcome 1 - The landscape, environment and culture of the National Park are conserved for current and future generations.

Introduction

We will use our resources, expertise and statutory powers to support and encourage those responsible for land and buildings to minimise the impact of climate change and implement sustainable development. We will promote the wide variety of local, linguistic, artistic and social cultures found within the National Park through our conservation, education and interpretation activities.

What are we trying to achieve? -

A special landscape

- Which is admired by everyone for its beauty
- Where the native species flourish
- Where local business benefits from the special qualities
- · Where historic features are maintained
- Where the linguistic, artistic and social cultures are celebrated

Improvement Objective for Outcome 1

To review at least 50% of the managed sites during 2013/14 and identify any failing to meet their management plan objectives.

Where are we now with this improvement objective?

During 2013 a review of all sites managed for conservation was commenced, to ensure the management regime for each site was delivering the planned outcomes All sites were visited and data so far indicates success on 70% of the sites reviewed. The National Park Authority manages directly or supports land owners to manage 1,636 hectares on 107 sites for conservation purposes and new sites are targeted to develop biodiversity corridors and extend zones. This is a reduction on last year as during the review a number of sites were considered to no longer require on-going management as they were in a stable condition.

Eleven landowners were given advice and support on conservation management and joining agri-environment schemes.

New sites are chosen to increase the area of land in the National Park managed for conservation and to improve habitat connectivity across the county.

How will we measure our performance for this improvement objective?

The majority of these sites will be monitored annually to assess the overall ecological condition and highlight whether or not a site has been managed in line with the objectives laid out by its management plan.

Sites will be assigned a status according to the following conditions:

- Green Site is in good ecological condition and is being managed in line with the management plan.
- Amber Site is being managed in line with the management plan but ecology is not yet in expected condition.
- Red Site is in poor ecological condition or is not being managed in line with the management plan.

- a. Land managed in partnership with NPA is improving in biodiversity over time
- b. There is no reduction in the quality of the landscape, as identified in Landmap;
- c. There is a reduction in the number of Listed Buildings at risk;
- d. This year over 30,000 people are introduced to cultural aspects of the National Park through the Urdd Eisteddfod, archaeology, art and language related events.

What we achieved
We have commenced a full review of all sites being managed by or with the assistance of the Authority. All sites will have been visited and progress reports being prepared. 70% of the sites are meeting their management plan objectives and the remainder (mainly new sites) are progressing as expected.
As part of the review, active management on a number of sites has ceased as these have reached a satisfactory and sustainable condition. The area under management has reduced from 172 sites of 1,938 ha to 107 sites totalling 1,636 ha.
Eleven landowners were given advice and support on conservation management and joining agri-environment schemes.
Only 3 planning applications were approved contrary to recommendation but none were outside the policies in the Local Development plan.
The Oriel y Parc visitor centre promotes understanding of the landscape through the medium of art in partnership with National Museum of Wales and with exhibitions and residencies by local artists with over 30,000 people viewing the Gallery each year. An estimated 5,000 people attended the

	Authority's stand at the Urdd Eisteddfod.
buildings and encourage owners of	17 grants totalling £100,000 were awarded during 2013 for the improvement of historic buildings. Landowners are encouraged to conserve scheduled ancient monument sites although coastal erosion is probably the most significant cause of damage.

How do we compare?

Although the latest key species indicators show a reduction, this is much less than most other species as shown in local and national comparisons such as the State of Wildlife in Pembrokeshire and the National Farmland Birds Survey. The percentage of listed buildings and archaeological sites at risk is similar to the average in the UK national parks.

Measure	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Comparison/Comment
cusu.c	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15	
% of NPA managed sites which are in good and/or improving ecological condition & being managed in line with the management. plan		75%	70%	75%	No sites are considered as failing and the others are in the early stage of a management regime.
Number of approved developments contrary to landscape protection policies (LDP Policies 8 or 15)	0	No more than 2	0	No more than 2	Authority is determining applications in accordance with policy
Area of land actively managed for conservation in partnership with NPA	1800ha (est)	1890ha	1636ha	1700ha	Area reduced during 2013 as review has identified sites which no longer require on-going management
% of listed buildings at risk		4%	4% (48 bldgs)	4%	Average in English NPAs – 3%. BBNPA 6.6%, SNPA 16%
Number of buildings at risk rescued through NPA action during the year as a % of the total of listed buildings at risk		10%	0	10%	NPA provide advice to several property owners, but no funding during 2013/14. SNPA rescued 2.7%
Number of people engaged through cultural events		30,000	Over 43,000	40,000	Includes Oriel y Parc Gallery, historic events and visitors to PCNPA stand at Urdd Eisteddfod (2013 only)

Improvement Outcome 2 - Residents and visitors from a wide range of backgrounds enjoy, appreciate and understand the National Park.

Introduction

We will promote access and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy recreation and the natural, cultural and historic environment of the Park, and we will use the special qualities of the National Park as the basis for lifelong learning for all.

What are we trying to achieve?

Safe and accessible opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of the National Park's special qualities by;

- Providing easy access to appropriate recreational activities free from barriers for all potential users
- Information and interpretation is easily available and accessible
- The resources and special qualities of the National Park are inspirational for life-long learning

Improvement Objective for Outcome 2

To develop a network of rights of way which are open, usable, suitably signposted, and in an acceptable condition with at least 80% of path network open and meeting the Authority's quality standard by March 2014.

Where are we now with this improvement objective?

The Authority maintains over 1127km of footpaths and bridleways, including the popular Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail. By the end of 2013 over 78% of the paths were open, usable and maintained to the Authority's quality standard.

How will we measure our performance for this improvement objective?

The paths will be surveyed against the quality standard criteria, at least once every five years. A survey of the condition and quality of all rights of way in the National Park is being undertaken and should be completed during 2014.

- a. Over 80% of the rights of way meet the Authority's agreed standards.
- b. The number of people using the path network is increasing,
- c. We engage directly with over 250,000 individuals, including at least 5,000 'hard to reach' participants through the Discovery and Ranger programmes, and via the Authority's visitor centres and attractions.
- d. The number of volunteers participating in the work of the National Park Authority increases and a wider range of opportunities for volunteers is provided.

What we said we would do	What we achieved
Maintain and improve the Coast Path, inland rights of way, and other paths;	By the end of 2013 over 78% of the paths were open, usable and maintained to the Authority's quality standard.
Develop interpretation, education, website and other media to promote the relevance of the National Park in addressing environmental and socio-economic concerns;	The Authority's website attracts more than 160,000 individual visits, and the enjoy website has been substantially improved. 225,000 copies of the Authority's flagship visitor publication, Coast to Coast, are distributed every year and this is now available as a downloadable app on mobile phones. The award winning posters remain popular. About 8,000 children visited Carew and Castell Henllys as part of the Authority's education service. Details of the wide variety of walks throughout the National park are available in publications and leaflets, with over 200 downloadable maps on the Park Authority's main website.
Complete the Origins project at Castell Henllys interpreting the prehistory of the area;	Delays in confirming increased funding led to the design stage being completed later than expected, but with an improved overall project. Contracts for construction and interpretation are now let with completion planned for Autumn 2014.
Engage with 'hard to reach' groups, at our centres and through a wide range of organised events including Mosaic Wales, and 'Your Park' activities;	Over 5,000 participants engaged in the Your Park, Mosaic, Health related and Ranger led activities
Recruit, train and support the development of new and existing volunteers and involve them in activities designed to conserve the National Park and enhance both their own experience and that of the other users of the National Park.	Over 200 volunteer events involving 1,800 volunteer days.

How do we compare?

In 2011/12 approximately 72% of paths in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park were open and usable and this is now 78%. This compares to 76% in the Brecon Beacons National Park. The average in England's National Parks is 85% with the average across Wales estimated at about 55%, although there is no current data available.

Measure	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Comparison/Comment
	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15	
% of RoW open & accessible	72%	80%	78%	80%	Quality criteria changed
meeting the quality standard					during 2012. Full survey
					underway – figures
					estimated based on
					partial survey. BBNPA
					report 58%.
Number of people using	18,690		13,646		Exceptionally poor
footpaths (from fixed					weather has probably led
counters)					to the decrease
Number of people involved as			1,874		New indicator. SNPA
volunteers					involved 1,418.
Number of volunteer events			219		New indicator
Level of inspiration of		10	10	10	Calculated annually
learners/pupils engaging with					2011/12 - BBNPA 10
the National Park as reported					SNPA 10
by teachers (modal score, 11					
point scale)					
Total number of people	270,495	275,000	Over	250,000	Includes centres, schools,
engaged directly by NPA staff			275,600		Activities & Events, Social
					Inclusion, health events.
					(Target reduced in
					anticipation of reduction
					in visitor numbers.)

Improvement Outcome 3 - The work of the National Park Authority has a positive, sustainable, impact on the local economy and the well-being of residents and visitors to the National Park.

Introduction

We will encourage the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles by providing easy access to recreation, and by promoting sustainable transport, renewable energy sources and the well-being of communities. We will use our planning responsibilities to assist in the provision of affordable homes.

We will encourage local businesses, in particular tourism and agriculture, to ensure a sustainable use of the resources of the Park in the development of their businesses.

What are we trying to achieve?

The National Park Authority's work is improving economic and social wellbeing by

- Promoting affordable and quality housing
- Encouraging and supporting local sustainable business
- Engaging with local communities and encouraging volunteering
- Providing activities which have a positive impact on health
- Promoting a clean and safe environment, and
- Promoting sustainable development

Improvement Objective for Outcome 3

To provide our services in a manner which improves the socio-economic well-being of residents and visitors to the National Park.

Where are we now with this improvement objective?

A number of the services of the National Park Authority have a positive impact on the local economy. The landscape of the National Park, as protected by our policies provides the foundation for a tourism industry that supports hundreds of businesses and is worth over £500million a year. The Authority itself provides services such as rights of way, visitor centres, Coast to Coast and other publications and grant schemes that add value to the work of groups such as tourism businesses, recreation providers, farmers and builders. To date no satisfactory means of measuring this economic benefit has been devised. The Authority recognises a need to develop a better understanding of this issue if it is to make more of a contribution in the future.

We also recognise that out socio-economic contribution is far broader than supporting the local economy. We seek to provide affordable housing through the planning system. We have already achieved much in making recreation and access to the Park more accessible through reducing the number of stiles on footpaths, provision wheel chair friendly footpaths, supervised and guided walks and three mobility scooters. Over 2,000 people have been engaged with the National Park in 2012/13 through Authority led events. Specific work has been undertaken to encourage more people from ethnic minority backgrounds to use the National Park, through the MOSAIC Wales project.

To develop a better understanding of this issue, the Authority, along with the other two Welsh NPAs will be undertaking a scrutiny exercise to identify ways we can increase our contribution to the socio-economic well-being of residents and visitors to the National Park.

How will we measure our performance for this improvement objective?

While recognising the limitations of our current data gathering in this area we consider that the following would act as valid proxy data:

- Number of affordable housing units approved;
- % of planning applications for commercial activities approved;
- Number of events to support improvement in health;
- Number of users of the rights of way network (based on our counters);
- Number of people who access our programmes;
- Number of visitors to our visitor centres;
- Users of the Greenways buses.

Although we can measure the number of people introduced to the National Park through Authority organised events, and visitor centres it is difficult to measure their economic impact. We will therefore use qualitative measures and case studies to demonstrate the economic contribution of national park services.

- a. The organised events introduce over 5,000 people who might not normally be engaged to the National Park each year and surveys show a high level of customer satisfaction;
- b. Over 10% of all planning approvals for housing will be for affordable homes:
- c. We can demonstrate the socio-economic benefits of the NPA's services.

What we said we would do	What we achieved
Implement the recommendations from the scrutiny exercise into affordable housing provision;	The report from the scrutiny committee was approved by the NPA in October and the recommendations are being taken forward in the review of the Local Development Plan
Undertake a scrutiny exercise, along with the other two Welsh NPAs to identify how we can increase our contribution to the socio-economic well-being of residents and visitors to the National Park;	The joint scrutiny committee met in February and Snowdonia NPA are commissioning research project through a university.
Investigate means of measuring the economic contribution of the National Park and the Authority's services;	Consultants Ove Arup were commissioned to produce a report 'Valuing National Parks', published in autumn 2013.

Work with the Destination Pembrokeshire Partnership and others to encourage and support sustainable tourism businesses and promote Pembrokeshire as a destination;	We have worked closely with Pembrokeshire Tourism and PCC to produce the Destination Pembrokeshire Action Plan
Develop closer working relationships with the business sector;	Officers have attended regular meetings of Pembrokeshire Business initiative. Workshops held for planning agents and architects. The Sustainable Development Fund supported 4 private sector and 5 community based projects.
Prepare the annual delivery report on the Local Development Plan;	Report completed and approved by NPA in October.
Continue the 'Walkability', 'Your Park' and Mosaic Wales projects and other inclusion related activities;	Over 5,000 people participated in events under these projects. During the first 18 months of the 3 year MOSAIC project, 56 champions had been recruited, at least one cultural event had been held in each Park, 492 people had visited the National Parks under the project and a further 600 introduced to the Parks through talks and presentations.
Continue financial support for Greenways bus services.	Funding for this service has been maintained at last year's level.

How do we compare?

Data on wellbeing is not generally available for the National Park area. A very limited number of affordable housing units have been approved in the area, largely because of the economic climate, and as the Authority is not a housing authority this compares unfavourably with other local authorities.

Measure	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Comparison/Comment
	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15	
% of new housing units which	20%	20%	19%	20%	BBNPA – 10%, SNPA 33%
are affordable					
No of new housing units			53		SNPA 27, BBNPA 83
approved					
Number of people using	86,000	83,000	87,800	88,000	Target is subject to
coastal buses etc					service continuing to be

Measure	Actual 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Actual 2013/14	Target 2014/15	Comparison/Comment
					jointly funded with PCC
Number of people involved in health related events arranged by NPA	902	1,200	2,252	2,000	Walkability project
Number of 'hard to reach' people engaging with the National Park	2,708	5,000	5,070	5,000	Includes Your Park, Mosaic, Rangers, & Health projects



Improvement Outcome 4 - The National Park Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners.

Introduction

We will work to meet standards of good practice in terms of governance, fairness and efficiency, and we will work with residents, visitors and partners.

What are we trying to achieve?

The general public can have confidence that Authority

- Is open, fair and transparent in its decision making;
- Provides value for money and quality services;
- Works well with partner organisations;
- Listens to and respects the views of local communities;
- Contributes to reducing the impacts of climate change;
- Is well managed and governed, and
- Is recognised as a good employer.

Improvement Objective for Outcome 4

To maintain and improve the level of customer satisfaction for our services.

Where are we now with this improvement objective?

We carry out various customer satisfaction surveys at some of our centres, our education activities, and our planning service. We also used the Pembrokeshire Citizens Panel to survey the satisfaction levels of the local residents.

How will we measure our performance for this improvement objective?

By carrying out customer surveys on our services using Citizens' Panel.

- a. We receive a favourable Corporate Review and Annual Improvement Report each year from Wales Audit Office;
- b. Customer satisfaction levels are improving:
- c. Our planning service maintains and improves its performance.
- d. The CO² emissions generated by our energy and travel requirements are reduced by an average of 3% annually.

What we said we would do	What we achieved
Measure and improve our customer satisfaction levels;	Customer satisfaction levels were again very high for our education and visitor centre services. A citizens' panel survey published in March 2013 indicated the public considered our services were good or excellent, although planning was rated lower than the others.

Improve the response times for both pre-application enquiries and planning applications and develop improved on-line access to application information	applications within 8 weeks compared to 679 the previous year.		
Continue to improve the governance of the Authority;	Wales Audit Office reports continued to show good governance with only minor recommendations for improvements.		
Improve efficiency and reduce costs of the organisation;	The Authority has taken action to reduce its overall budget over the next two years by over 15%		
Continue to reduce CO ² emissions.	CO ² emissions were reduced by over 6% compared to 2012/13, with the introduction of a new biomass boiler and photovoltaic panels at hq, which has now achieved an energy rating of 'B'.		

Measure	Actual	Torget	Actual	Target	Comparison/Comment
ivieasure	2012/13	Target 2013/14	2013/14	Target 2014/15	Companson/Comment
CO ² emissions generated by	374,620	417,500	353,523	343,000	Reduction of approx.
our energy and travel					5.6% over last year
Member attendance at main	74%	75%	83%	75%	Brecon 81%
committees					SNPA 78%
Member attendance at	74%	66%	74%	75%	BBNPA 70%
training events					SNPA 54%
Employee costs as a % of total		55%		52%	
revenue cost					
The number of working days/	7	6	8	6	SNPA 6.6 BBNPA 6
shifts per full time equivalent					English NPAs average 5
(FTE) local authority					Public sector average 8.1
employee lost due to sickness					Private sector 5.9
absence.					
The % of employees who	7%		5.2%		SNPA 9%
leave employment of the					BBNPA 14.7%
Authority, whether on a					
voluntary or involuntary basis.					
Number of planning	438		434		SNPA 577
applications registered					BBNPA 416
The % of planning applications	83.5%		87%		SNPA 84%
determined during the year					BBNPA 92%
that were approved.					
The % of planning applications	67%	70%	76%	75%	BBNPA 75%
determined within 8 weeks					SNPA 63%

Measure	Actual 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Actual 2013/14	Target 2014/15	Comparison/Comment
% planning appeals	63%		47%		9 out of 19
supporting the NPA decision					BBNPA 38%
					SNPA 76%
% of enforcement cases	85%	85%	70%	85%	SNPA – 61%
closed within 12 weeks					BBNPA - 24%
Number of enforcement cases	92	80	84	80	SNPA 54
outstanding for more than 12					BBNPA 77
weeks					
The number and percentage					Welsh Language Scheme
of posts in our Customer					indicator
Contact Centre that have		3 fte	3 fte		
been designated "Welsh		66%	66%		
essential" and that have been					
filled by bilingual staff					
The percentage of staff who					6 to 'A' level
have received Welsh language	250/	270/	270/	270/	34 to GCSE
training to a specific	25%	27%	27%	27%	(Welsh Language Scheme
qualification level					indicator)
The number of complaints					Welsh Language Scheme
received in relation to the					indicator
operation of the Welsh	0	0	0	0	
Language Scheme					
The number of complaints to					SNPA 0
the Ombudsman classed as	0	0	0	0	BBNPA 1
maladministration					